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Hermeneutics or Phenomenology: Reflections on Husserl's Historical Meditations as a "way" into Transcendental Phenomenology

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I. Introduction

In his last major work, The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology, Edmund Husserl attempts to "establish the unavoidable necessity of a transcendental-phenomenological reorientation of philosophy" by means of a "teleological-historical reflection."[1] Husserl characterizes the history of philosophy as a movement toward a necessary form of the philosophy of subjectivity.[2] According to this approach, each historically existing philosophy is a partial fulfillment of the idea of philosophy and this idea, in turn, is the hidden motive and unifying element in the historical development of philosophy. Husserl maintains that the idea of philosophy as the universal science of "what is" can once again be brought to clarity by means of historical reflection. Furthermore, it is only as

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transcendental phenomenology that the idea instituted by the Greeks can be brought to a final establishment. This claim that transcendental phenomenology is the fulfillment of the idea of philosophy is indeed a provocative one. While a complete justification of this claim might be in order, the present essay proposes to focus only on the question of whether or not the method of historical reflection practiced in the Crisis is adequate to the task of exhibiting the necessary reorientation of philosophy into transcendental phenomenology. In order to address this issue, attention must be directed at such questions as what kind of historical reflection is this and what is its relationship to traditional hermeneutics?

The investigation into the relationship between the phenomenological manner of historical reflection and traditional hermeneutics is provoked by the task and approach of the Crisis. The history of philosophy into which Husserl wants to immerse himself in order to expose its "inner meaning" and "hidden teleology" is only accessible to him in the texts and documents that have been preserved and handed down by the philosophical tradition to which he himself is an heir. Since the interpretation of written documents and the disclosure of hidden meaning have traditionally been the domain of hermeneutics, one might reasonably expect that Husserl's phenomenological-historical

investigation would make use of a hermeneutic. However, one searches in vain in the Crisis for the application of traditional hermeneutical procedures to the texts of Galileo, Kant, Descartes and so on.

To be sure, Husserl does attempt to shed some light on the method of historical investigation which he employs in the Crisis. Section 15 of the Crisis, entitled "Reflection on the Method of our Historical Manner of Investigation," broaches the question being raised in this paper. For the most part, however, one only learns that whatever else it might be, the phenomenological manner of historical investigation is not, nor does it make use of, ordinary historical research. Husserl is unconcerned with scientific history and disregards the objective moment of historical research; that is to say, his concern with history lies in a direction opposite from that of establishing historical facts and producing objectively valid interpretations of philosophical texts. In short, a phenomenological reflection on the history of philosophy shares neither the aim nor the method of a "humanistic science of 'how it really was."[3]

The essential problem is this: to the extent that Husserl's investigations involve in some way the interpretation of philosophical texts, it would seem that he requires a methodology of interpretation. However, Husserl

clearly considers philological-hermeneutical procedures unacceptable for the task of clarifying and grasping the ideal of philosophy and thus, simultaneously, providing a "way" into transcendental phenomenology. In an attempt to resolve this dilemma, the present essay will elucidate the reason behind Husserl's rejection of the philological-hermeneutical methodology of historical investigation. It will then consider how a reflection on the history of philosophy can provide a "way" into transcendental phenomenology and finally, it will return to a discussion of the method of historical reflection practiced in the Crisis.

II. Scientific History and the Problem of Method

Husserl's rejection of scientific historical methodology as the appropriate model for phenomenological historical investigation is intimately related to his Logos essay of 1911 in which he attacks historicism and Wilhelm Dilthey's Weltanschauungsphilosophie. Husserl writes that "the science of history can of itself decide nothing, either in a positive or negative sense...between historical and valid philosophy"[4] since "the desire either to provide or to refute ideas on the basis of facts is nonsense..."[5] The historian's task is not to

"decide as to the truth of given philosophical systems and, above all, as to the very possibility of a philosophical science that is valid in itself."[6] It is not the science of history itself that threatens the ideal possibility of a genuinely scientific philosophy. Historicism is the real culprit—but the two are not unrelated. Historicism arises from the improper extension of the findings of scientific historical research as exemplified in the attempt to either prove or disprove ideas on the basis of historical facts. In Philosophy as Rigorous Science, it is evident that Husserl views the historicist, as well as the naturalist, as participants in the cult of facts which confuses ideas with facts.

Time and again, Husserl insists on the distinction between philosophy as an historical fact and philosophy as an idea.[7] A reflection on the history of philosophy that is concerned exclusively with facts—with "how it really was" and with citations of the "documented 'personal testimony' of earlier philosophers"—can reveal nothing about the ideal of philosophy or about the necessary reorientation of philosophy into transcendental phenomenology. Only by "striking through" the historical facts can the genuine philosopher grasp the idea that hiddenly motivated the historical philosophies.[8] In light of this discussion, the question arises as to whether or not one can seriously advance the thesis

that the Crisis attempts to provide transcendental phenomenology with an historical foundation by citing historical facts. Furthermore, can this thesis be maintained without also viewing the Crisis as a radical departure from Husserl's earlier philosophical position as articulated in Philosophy as Rigorous Science? It would appear that this interpretation is untenable insofar as it leads to the same absurdity and historicism as the attempt to deny scientific philosophy on the basis of facts. The history of philosophy must not be substituted for philosophy. Husserl spoke out against this denigration of genuine philosophy in the Logos essay and again in the Crisis.[9]

In the Crisis, Husserl expresses concern over the development of method in the natural sciences. He contends that too frequently this development of method results in the emptying of its original meaning. "To the essence of all method belongs the tendency to superficialize itself in accordance with technization."[10] Husserl then adds that the "developed method...is, as method, an art techne which is handed down; but its true meaning is not necessarily handed down with it."[11] What is not generally recognized is that Husserl believes that this emptying of meaning is also a persistent danger in the development of method in the human sciences. This problematic development on the part of the

human sciences can be readily seen in Dilthey's 1900 essay, "The Development of Hermeneutics," in which philological procedures and hermeneutics are coupled. Dilthey's position is that hermeneutics has enjoyed a long tradition of continued development similar to the development of method in the natural sciences. Since hermeneutics is the principal method of the Geisteswissenschaften, the argument is that it can also produce objectively valid results as do the natural sciences.

According to Dilthey, interpretation is the methodical understanding of recorded expressions. While understanding (Verstehen) encompasses the various forms of expressions of life (Lebensausserungen), it "only becomes interpretation which achieves validity when confronted with linguistic records."[12] Hence, historical research which aims at objectivity requires a hermeneutics, or a methodology for understanding written records. The main task of the philological procedure of hermeneutics "...is to counteract the constant eruption of romantic whim and skeptical subjectivity into the realm of history by laying the historical foundations of valid interpretations on which all certainty in history rests."[13] Moreover, it is especially when the work to be interpreted is that of a great thinker, perhaps a great poet or philosopher, that it can be "interpreted with complete objectivity."[14]

Dilthey is keenly aware that the art of interpretation is largely a matter of the personal skill and genius of the exegete. But it is precisely because of the rarity of this type of genius that it is necessary to develop a method which specifies the rules to be followed by exegetes of less skill. What results from this technization of method is the possibility of handing down the method as well as the possibility of continually perfecting and refining it.[15] The implication is that the methodology of the human sciences has enjoyed the same kind of continual development found in the natural sciences and can thus compete with them for scientific status.

If attention is redirected to Husserl, one discovers that he is equally concerned with the technization of method in the human sciences as he is with the technization of method in the natural sciences. He critically observes that an individual can display great skill or even genius in the application of the method without truly understanding the point behind it or, in other words, the individual can produce "exact" knowledge or "exact" interpretations that are nevertheless essentially devoid of meaning. Husserl leaves no doubt that these remarks are directed at the method of the human sciences, of which history is paradigmatic.

One could display skill, talent, even genius in them, for example, in the art of inventing new formulae, new exact theories, or, also, in the art of interpreting historical documents, grammatically analyzing languages, constructing historical interconnections, etc.[16]

Since the art of textual and historical interpretation is not genuine science, nor can it of itself yield scientific insight, Husserl, in the Crisis and related treatises, painstakingly distinguishes his manner of historical reflection from ordinary history. In the "Origin of Geometry" he states that the question of "origin" is not considered to be a "philological-historical" question.[17] Husserl's concern is with the original sources of meaning which serve as a foundation for geometry and not with the first geometers and "what they really said." These original sources of meaning can only be disclosed by the transcendental philosopher.

The philological approach to "origins" is presumably directed toward creative personalities because it rests on the prejudice that a cultural formation is only comprehensible in light of its author's intention and historical situation. According to this view, the historian must take up a position in the past in order to understand the past as it understood itself. Once again, the bete noire of Philosophy as Rigorous Science has surfaced. In the words of Paul Ricoeur,

historicism "is the epistemological presupposition that the content of literary works and of cultural documents receives its intelligibility from its connection to the social conditions of the community that produced it or to which it was destined.[18] The meaning of a text or a cultural document is relative to the particular historical milieu in which it first appeared and every cultural formation can only be judged, evaluated and understood from within the historical context in which it emerges. The historical researcher, as the person interested in objective historical understanding, must refrain from applying norms and categories that are not contemporaneous with the text. To overcome the hermeneutical distance between the present historical context of the researcher and the historical milieu of his subject matter becomes a condition for the possibility of objective historical understanding. Accordingly, the historian must take up a position in the past in order to understand it as it understood itself or, as this pertains to the Crisis, to understand past philosophers as they understood themselves and their task.

III. Self-Effacement and Historical Reflection

How can the historical researcher rise above the historical present in which he is so firmly entrenched? How can he lift himself out of the historical world in which he is rooted in order to understand the past "as it really was"? The German historian, Leopold von Ranke, demanded as part of the historical method, the self-effacement (Selbstausloschung) of the historian. The goal of this methodological self-effacement was the disengagement of the historian from his historical present so as to enable him to observe the spectacle of history "as it really was." When Husserl critically observes in the "Origin of Geometry" that the human science of "how it really was" presupposes the historical a priori which it never makes thematic, his remark is evidently directed at Ranke. Dilthey, however, must also be included in this critique insofar as he shares the general aim of Ranke's methodological Selbstausloschung.[19] Gadamer, for example, has expressed the view in his book, Truth and Method, that what Dilthey's epistemological thinking attempts to justify is the self-effacement of Ranke.[20]

Husserl criticizes on several grounds the attempt to understand history objectively by effacing the self and its

present. First of all, underlying the mandate to efface the self is a latent or residual tendency toward historicism. For Husserl, it is inconceivable that every type of historical formation should be viewed as spatio-temporally bound and as understandable only within the historical context in which it first emerged. Secondly, scientism shows its face in Ranke's methodological principle. The attempt to extricate the researcher from involvement in his subject matter is aimed at procuring the kind of objectivity to which one is accustomed in the natural sciences. Finally, Husserl contends that "what is historically primary in itself is our present."[21] The way to the past is through the present. Clarification of the present sheds light on the past which, in turn, aids in understanding the present. While Husserl refers to his historical reflection as a "zigzag course" it is evident that it is the present that is decisive. Furthermore, if factual history is to become comprehensible at all, the historico-philosophical investigation of the "present" must quickly move to the eidetic level.

Only the disclosure of the essentially general structure lying in our present and then in every past or future historical present as such, and, in totality, only the disclosure of the concrete, historical time in which we live, in which our total

humanity lives in respect to its total, essentially general structure—only this disclosure can make possible historical inquiry (Historie) which is truly understanding, insightful, and in the genuine sense scientific.[22]

Husserl's answer to the historicist is now discernible. The historicist advances the thesis that cultural products are only intelligible in the cultural setting in which they emerged and to which they are directed. Access to past cultural settings is either denied altogether or is possible only by employing the technique of self-effacement. Husserl responds that we should concentrate instead on our present historical situation and engage not in a factual description but rather in an eidetic description of it. Since the essential structures of the "historical present" are also those of every past and future historical world, a way is open to the past that does not bypass the present and the researcher's engagement in it.

In Experience and Judgment, Husserl addresses the challenge posed by the historicist's conception of cultural products. Husserl observes that all cultural formations are historical in a sense. Indeed, all the products of mental life have a history, that is, they have an origin in particular epochs and in particular cultural milieus. This does not

mean, however, that cultural formations are only comprehensible when viewed within the historical space-time in which they originated nor does it mean that the meaning or sense of all cultural formations can be made self-evident only if the temporal distance between the present and the past is overcome. Such an interpretation is untenable because it overlooks the important distinction, made explicit in Experience and Judgment, between "free idealities" and "bound idealities."

Free idealities are not bound to any territory, to any socio-historical milieu, whereas bound idealities are said to be "bound to Earth, to Mars, to particular territories, etc."[23] It belongs to the sense of free idealities that they are valid "once and for all" and "for everyone." They include, for example, "logicomathematical systems and pure essential structures of every kind."[24] Husserl asserts in the "Origin of Geometry" that geometry is such a supertemporal ideality inasmuch as it is accessible to geometricians from every culture and historical epoch. The original mental activity that produced this cultural formation can be reactivated (made self-evident again) by geometers that do not share the same socio-historical world as the first geometers. On the other hand, bound idealities do not lend themselves to the same kind of reactivation. An example of a bound ideality

proposed by Husserl is a civil constitution. Reactivation is "the proper sense" belongs only to the citizens living under the constitution who share a common cultural heritage whereas the alien, who does not share in this heritage, can only "figuratively" reactivate the civil constitution. Interestingly, Husserl identifies this figurative reactivation with understanding in a "merely historical fashion."

The conclusion to be drawn from this discussion is that historicism may be a well-founded and plausible view but only insofar as it pertains to bound idealities. It is clearly not the case that all idealities, all cultural formations, are bound to a particular socio-historical world and thus lend themselves only to "figurative" or "historical" reactivation. On the contrary, Husserl's position is that omnispatiality and omnitemporality belong to the sense of some historical products (e.g., free idealities) and the mental activity that initially gave birth to them can in principle be reactivated by any rational being.

For Husserl, philosophy belongs to the class of idealities designated as free idealities. In the "Vienna Lecture" Husserl writes that "these ideal structures of theoria are concurrently lived through and taken over without any difficulty by others who reproduce the process of understanding and production."[25]

Unlike all other cultural works, philosophy is not a movement of interest which is bound to the soil of the national tradition. Aliens, too, learn to understand it and generally take part in the immense cultural transformation which radiates out from philosophy.[26]

One might argue at this point that the discussion has shifted from a concern with de facto philosophies, the philosophies of Descartes, Kant, etc. as they are propounded in the works of these seminal thinkers, to a focus on philosophy as an idea. But this is precisely what Husserl invites the reader to do when he constantly reiterates the need to strike through the crust of historical facts, to go beyond the documented personal testimony of our philosophical predecessors in order to discover the hidden unity in the history of philosophy. What is at issue in Husserl's historical meditations are not the philosophical texts per se but the idea of philosophy that is implied in the claims made by these texts.

IV. The Aim of Historical Reflection

It has been suggested that Husserl does not employ a methodology of interpretation that would give his reading of

the history of philosophy the character of an "objectively valid" interpretation. Nor does this seem to matter. Husserl's talk of reactivation, re-experiencing (Nacherleben) and explication notwithstanding, he apparently feels no need to employ the philological-hermeneutical method of Dilthey and others—an approach to history and to historical documents that he apparently found suitable only for factual history. It would appear in the light of this observation that the purpose of the historical meditations in the Crisis must be something different from an historical justification of transcendental phenomenology. And yet, this interpretation of Husserl's turn to history is a prevalent one which, when coupled with a genuine concern for the problematics of historical research, results in a distortion of the Husserlian project.

An example drawn from recent literature serves to highlight this concern.[27] It is argued that in giving priority to the present as the only perspective from which one can view the past, Husserl cannot be certain that the past as it appears in the present is the past as it really was.[28] It is also suggested that the Husserlian claim to be able, by means of a historico-philosophical reflection, "to understand past thinkers in a way that they could never have understood

themselves" means that since we do not understand past philosophers as they understood themselves, that we do not understand them at all. As support for this interpretation we are reminded that Husserl himself refers to his reading of the history of philosophy as a "poetic invention." But if Husserl cannot verify the validity of his reading of philosophical history, then the possibility exists that he has simply imposed his idea of philosophy on history, thereby giving it the appearance of a teleological movement toward the idea of philosophy as transcendental phenomeology. The result of such an interpretation of Husserl is the undermining of his historical justification of phenomenology.[29]

An alternative, more plausible interpretation can be defended. Husserl is not concerned with a historical justification of phenomenology in the ordinary sense of resorting to the factual study of history. Facts, as we have seen, cannot provide proofs either for or against ideas. When Husserl refers to his understanding of the history of philosophy as a "poetic invention," he seeks only to underscore his lack of concern with objective or factual history. In the context in which Husserl mentions "poetic invention," he remarks that every beginning philosopher always has available to him "a science of history and in

particular a scientific history of philosophy" and yet the genuine philosopher does not concern himself with scientific history.[30] Husserl then poses the questions:

"Is the work lost that he, unconcerned about scientific historical history, has done under the guidance of...his "unhistorical," untrue Plato, etc.? What kind of "poetic invention" (Dichtung), what kind of historical interpretation is this?"[31]

These are undoubtedly serious questions which Husserl poses to himself and his unique mode of historical reflection. However, they are not to be interpreted as an admission of the failure of his project.

Husserl's historical interests are motivated by the crisis within the European sciences and humanity. The theme of the Crisis is that philosophy is the essence of European humanity and if European mankind is to renew itself and realize its destiny, it will require a scientific philosophy in the mode of transcendental phenomenology. The historical meditations in the Crisis, by exhibiting the necessity of scientific philosophy, provide a "way" into transcendental philosophy. For Husserl, phenomenology can only be justified by phenomenological philosophy which, strictly speaking, begins with the performance of the transcendental reduction.

The only justification for phenomenology is its successful realization. Thus, the "historico-teleological reflection" in the Crisis does not represent an attempt to justify phenomenology historically (factual history) but rather to provide a path into transcendental phenomenology by motivating the historically reflecting philosopher to perform the reduction that is necessary for genuine philosophizing.[32]

The question now is: how can the reduction be motivated by historical reflection? According to Husserl, a reflection on the history of philosophy would enable one to grasp what must have been and must continue to be the goal of philosophy. This clarification of the idea of philosophy motivates the performance of the reduction by making evident that the task of philosophy as universal and absolutely grounded science requires it. Beginning with the Greeks, philosophy is the idea of a universal sciences of "what is." Descartes, however, fundamentally transforms philosophy, not because he abandons the Greek ideal but because philosophy becomes for him a philosophy of subjectivity. The metaphysical question "what is being?" is only answerable within the Cartesian framework in terms of subjectivity. Husserl lauds Descartes as the first to discover the ground upon which philosophy as rigorous science is founded but this great discovery is transformed into failure

because Descartes remained committed to a mathematical model of science and because he misinterprets the ego disclosed by the epoche as the human ego. This failure is ony a failure, however, in terms of the ideal of philosophy, the motif, that guides Descartes' philosophizing. The historically reflecting philosopher can discover, in the course of his critical reflections, what must be done to transform Descartes' failure into success. What is required is the reduction to transcendental subjectivity. The history of modern philosophy beginning with Descartes through Hume, Kant and beyond is a struggle for the genuine transcendental reduction.[33]

But what about the danger that the historically meditating philosopher, in this case Husserl imposes his preconceived notion of philosophy on history, thus making it appear as though his predecessors, unknown to themselves, have been attempting all along to realize his idea of philosophy? This is undeniably a real danger of which Husserl himself was keenly aware. For the genuine philosopher, "philosophy" always remains an enigma.[34] Husserl observes that the genuine philosopher is not in the position to accept the validity of any pregiven philosophy, neither his own nor that of another philosopher, "since the possibility of a

philosophy as such, as the sole philosophy, is to be his problem."[35]

In his introductory remarks to the Cartesian Meditations, Husserl emphatically denies that the beginning philosopher can presuppose any "normative ideal of science." He takes Descartes to task for having presupposed mathematical science as the paradigm of genuine science and criticizes him for presupposing the possibility of realizing his goal of transforming philosophy into an absolutely grounded science.[36] These criticisms, however, do not preclude the use of the Cartesian idea of science as a guide in one's meditations. Indeed, it is possible to reflect on the particular sciences and immerse oneself in their scientific activity without taking a position regarding their validity. Husserl argues that science as a cultural fact is not necessarily identical with science in the "true and genuine sense."[37] Be that as it may, even as historical facts, the particular sciences and philosophical systems involve a claim to universal validity and "science as an idea--as the idea, genuine science--'lies,' still undisclosed, precisely in this claim."[38] What results from this immersion into the scientific enterprise is the recognition that the Cartesian idea of science is the idea that guides all scientific striving toward universality.[39] What is essential to science in general

is the resolve not to accept anything as true, as scientific knowledge, except what has been justified by evidence. Similarly, Husserl tries, through his historical meditations in the Crisis, to elicit and clarify the idea of philosophy that has receded into obscurity in the history of philosophy. But it must again be underscored that this clarification and justification of the idea of philosophy as genuine science is possible only with the performance of the transcendental reduction.

We must now address the remarkable claim that one can, from the vantage point of the newly established transcendental philosophy, "understand past thinkers in a way that they could never have understood themselves."[40] The statement is provocative in the present context because it is so reminiscent of the hermeneutic-philological tradition from which Husserl wants to disassociate himself. Husserl speaks of understanding an author "differently" than he understood himself, not "better," but he nevertheless clearly echoes Dilthey, who writes, "the final goal of the hermeneutic procedure is to understand the author better than he understood himself; a statement which is the necessary conclusion of the doctrine of unconscious creation."[41] For Dilthey, interpretation brings into relief what necessarily remains hidden and undisclosed to the author. The

interpreter can thus understand the author better than the author understood himself because the author as author does not understand himself (i.e., his work). In short, an author is not a privileged interpreter of his own work.[42] Seen in this light, Husserl's decisions not to rely on the "self-interpretations" of past philosophers in his historical meditations loses some of its strangeness.

The formula of better understanding an author is not unique to Dilthey. O. F. Bollnow suggests that the formula was probably familiar to Dilthey because of his acquaintance with he philological tradition and with the writings of Schleiermacher where the expression is also found. What is perhaps more interesting is that Bollnow is able to trace the statement to Fichte and Kant but not earlier. However, he conjectures that it is unlikely that the idea originated with Kant but rather that Kant, in all probability, borrowed it from the philologists.[43]

What does all this mean for Husserl? What does it mean to understand an author differently or better than he understood himself if one is unconcerned with philological-historical questions, with creative personalities and with what they really said? In addressing this issue, we must take our clue from Kant and not Dilthey. At the beginning of "The Transcendental Dialectic" (Book I, §I), Kant reinterprets the

Platonic expression "idea," but at the same time declines to enter into a literary investigation of the meaning given to this expression by Plato.

> I need only remark that it is by no means unusual, upon comparing the thoughts which an author has expressed in regard to his subject, whether in ordinary conversation or in writing, to find that we understand him better than he has understood himself. As he has not sufficiently determined his concept, he has sometimes, spoken, or even thought, in opposition to his own intention.[44]

It is not difficult to imagine Husserl writing that, since the concept and task of philosophy had not been sufficiently clarified and determined by his predecessors that what they thought and wrote may be frequently contrary to their own intentions. Presumably, if one can achieve clarity regarding the idea of philosophy, the light that will be provided will also illuminate the true intentions of one's predecessors.

Gadamer captures the spirit of what Kant and Fichte meant by understanding a writer better than he understood himself. He asserts that the formula functions for Kant, not as principle of the art of literary criticism, but as a claim to go beyond the distortions and contradictions in a given theory.

> Thus, it is a principle that, entirely in the spirit of rationalism, claims, solely through thought, through the development of the implications of an

> author's ideas, to achieve insights that correspond to the real intentions of the author...[45]

With regard to Fichte's application of the expression, Gadamer writes:

> Thus the disputed formula makes no claim beyond that of philosophic critique of the object. Someone who is able to think his way better through what an author is talking about will be able to see what the author says in the light of a truth that is still hidden for the author.[46]

What Gadamer has written here clearly applies as well to Husserl's reading of the history of philosophy. Indeed, it is only in this sense that Husserl would suggest that he has understood past philosophers in a way that they could not have understood themselves. What at first appears to be an association between Husserl and the hermeneutic-philological tradition evanesces when seen in light of Gadamer's interpretation.

The method of historical reflection practiced by Husserl involves a peculiar sort of disclosure. The historically reflecting philosopher does not simply and passively appropriate an idea sedimented in history. After all, history does not simply contain some pre-existing scientific philosophy that only needs to be rediscovered

before it can serve as a model for absolute science. Rather, Husserl contends that philosophy as a genuine science does not even begin until its establishment as phenomenological philosophy.[47] The idea of philosophy is only fully comprehended in the final establishment of philosophy as transcendental phenomenology. Thus, historical reflection enables one to begin to discern a unity running through the history of philosophy but it is only in the final establishment, only when a transcendental philosophy that fulfills its meaning has been realized, that the teleological-historical reflection receives its justification.

> Only in the final establishment is this revealed; only through it can the unified directedness of all philosophies and philosophers open up. From here elucidation can be attained which enables us to understand past thinkers in a way that they could never have understood themselves.[48]

V. Concluding Remarks: Historical Reflection & Eidetic Analysis

Although the hermeneutical-philological approach to historical research might serve as a propaedeutic to philosophical reflection, our study has shown that Husserl does not explicitly embrace such an approach. Jacques Derrida, in his commentary on Husserl's "Origin of

Geometry," notes that the method which is to give us new access to history is constantly practiced in the Crisis but is never made a problem there.[49] Indeed, Husserl does employ a method of historical investigation which he never explicitly clarifies. The following explanation might be offered. Since Husserl is not concerned with the "factual history" of historians and philologists, his method requires the eidetic reduction which renders historically factual dates, events and persons irrelevant.[50] Of course he takes his departure from historical facts--his present historical situation and the documents of historically existing philosophies--but because he is concerned with the essence of history and of philosophy he employs his previously developed method of ideation to delineate these essential structures.

A precedent for such an interpretation of Husserl's reading of the history of philosophy is found in T. Klein's essay, "Husserl's Kantian Meditations." Klein argues that Husserl treats "the idea of transcendental philosophy as an essence to be explicated and brought to clarity."[51] He furthermore contends that the method of intuiting essences developed by Husserl is brought to bear on the historical domain and even on historical documents. While Klein is correct in his insistence that the method of "free variation" that is crucial for the intuition of essences is limited in

historical reflection because the examples are drawn from the historical tradition and not from the imagination,[52] it is still legitimate to argue that Husserl's historical reflections involve the intuition of essences and that some form of eidetic variation is operative in them.

It should first of all be noted that "free variation" is the means by which the historically reflecting philosopher gains access to the essential structures of the life-world. The present socio-historical world can be imaginatively varied until its invariant structures are clearly "seen." Husserl observes that we have "the capacity of complete freedom to transform, in thought and phantasy, our human historical existence and what is there explosed as its life-world."[53] Free variation frees the philosopher who is reflecting on the nature of the historical world from his bondage to "the factually valid historical world." And, as we have seen, it is this disclosure of the essential structures of the life-world that is the condition for the possibility of truly insightful historical inquiry.

But exactly how the method of imaginative variation is applicable to the reading of the history of philosophy is more difficult to comprehend and certainly not made obvious. A clue can be garnered from Ideas, where Husserl specifically

relates the importance of history to the notion of "free fancy" and the intuition of essences.

> We can draw extraordinary profit from what history has to offer us, and still richer measure from the gifts of art and particularly poetry. These are indeed fruits of imagination, but in respect of the originality of the new formations,...they greatly excel the performances of our own fancy...[54]

In some sense at least, the history of philosophical systems functions as an "imaginative" variation of the idea of philosophy. What, from the perspective of scientific history, has the appearance of chaos is, when viewed from another perspective, the manifestation of a unified development of meaning. What Dilthey saw as a "chaotic variety of philosophic systems,"[55] Husserl sees as more or less successful attempts at realizing the ideal of philosophy as an absolutely grounded science. In eidetic insight, the essence of philosophy is revealed through its imperfect and distorted instantiations and thereby binds into unity the historically existing philosophical systems.

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NOTES

1. Edmund Husserl, The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy, trans. by David Carr (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 3, fn. 1. (Hereinafter cited as Crisis.)

2. See especially Crisis, pp. 18, 70; Edmund Husserl, Ideas: General Introduction into Pure Phenomenology, trans. by W. R. Boyce Gibson (London: Collier Books, 1962), p. 166 (Hereinafter cited as Ideas); Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology, trans. by Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), p. 4 (Hereinafter cited as CM); The Paris Lectures, trans. by Peter Koestenbaum (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), p. 5.

3. Crisis, Appendix VI: "The Origin of Geometry," p. 373.

4. Edmund Husserl, "Philosophy as Rigorous Science" in Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy, trans. by Quentin Lauer (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965), p. 126. (Hereinafter cited as PRS).

5. Ibid., pp. 126-127.

6. Ibid.

7. CM, p. 9; Crisis, Appendix I: "The Vienna Lecture," p. 291.

8. Crisis, p. 18.

9. Ibid., p. 196.

10. Ibid., p. 48.

11. Ibid., p. 56.

12. Wilhelm Dilthey, "The Development of Hermeneutics" in Wilhelm Dilthey: Selected Writings, ed. and trans. by H. P. Richman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 260.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid., p. 249.

15. See Wilhelm Dilthey, Der Aufbau der Geschichtlichen Welt in Den Geisteswissenschaften, Gesammelte Schriften VII, ed. by B. Groethuysen (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, 1958), p. 217, where he writes: "Auslegung und Kritik haben im geschichtlichen Verlauf immer neue Hilfsmittel zur Losung ihrer Aufgabe entwickelt, wie die Naturwissenschaftliche Forschung immer neue Verfeinerungen des Experiments."

16. Crisis, p. 194.

17. Crisis, Appendix VI, p. 354.

18. Paul Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning (Fort Worth: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976), pp. 89-90.

19. See Wilhelm Dilthey, Einleitung in Die Geisteswissenschaften, Gesammelte Schriften I, ed. by B. Groethuysen (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner

Verlagsgesellschaft, 1959), p. 94, where he writes with approval: "Wenn Ranke einmal ausspricht, er mochte sein Selbst ausloschen, um Die dinge zu sehen, wie sie gewesen sind, so druckt dies das tiefe Verlangen des wahren Geschichtschreibers nach objektiven Wirklichkeit sehr schon und kraftig aus."

20. Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method, trans. by G. Barden and J. Cumming (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), p. 204. Gadamer tempers his claim somewhat when he adds later on p. 207: "We might say that historical consciousness is not so much self-extinction as the intensified possession of itself, which distinguishes it from all other forms of mental life."

21. Crisis, Appendix VI, p. 373.

22. Ibid., pp. 371-372.

23. Edmund Husserl, Experience and Judgment: Investigations in a Genealogy of Logic, ed. by Ludwig Landgrebe and trans. by J. S. Churchill and K. Ameriks (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 267.

24. Ibid.

25. Crisis, Appendix I, p. 286.

26. Ibid.

27. See James C. Morrison, "Husserl's Crisis": Reflections on the Relationship of Philosophy and History" in Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 1977, 37(3). Our remarks will be limited to the interpretation proposed in §2, "Husserl's Interpretation of the History of Philosophy," which is the source of our concern.

28. Ibid., p. 320.

29. Ibid., p. 321.

30. Crisis, Appendix IX: "Denial of Scientific Philosophy," p. 393.

31. Ibid.

32. John J. Drummond, "Husserl on the Ways to Performance of the Reduction," in Man and World, 1975, 8(1), p. 47.

33. Crisis, p. 199.

34. Crisis, Appendix IX, p. 394.

35. Crisis, Appendix V: "Objectivity and the World of Experience," p. 351; see also Crisis, p. 76.

36. CM, p. 8. See also Paris Lectures, p. 5: "We do not give up Descartes' guiding goal of an absolute foundation for knowledge. At the beginning, however, to presuppose even the possibility of that goal would be prejudice." Moreover, in the Crisis, Husserl writes on p. 79: "He (Descartes) does not see that, by being convinced of the possibility of the goal...he has already left his radicalism behind."

37. CM, p. 9; Crisis, Appendix I, p. 291: "But now this is the danger point: 'philosophy,' here we must certainly distinguish between philosophy as a historical fact at a given time and philosophy as idea, as the idea of an infinite task."

38. CM, p. 8.

39. Ibid., p. 11.

40. Crisis, p. 73.

41. Dilthey, "Development of Hermeneutics," pp. 259-260.

42. See Gadamer, Truth and Method, p. 170.

43. Otto Friedrich Bollnow, "What does it mean to Understand a Writer better than He Understood Himself," trans. by Mary and Keith Algozin in Philosophy Today, 1979, p. 18.

44. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. by Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p. 310.

45. Gadamer, Truth and Method, pp. 171-172.

46. Ibid., p. 172.

47. PRS, pp. 73-74.

48. Crisis, p. 73.

49. Jacques Derrida, Edmund Husserl's "Origin of Geometry": An Introduction, trans. by John P. Leavey, Jr. (New York: Nicholas Hays, Ltd., 1978), p. 29.

50. Marvin Farber, The Foundation of Phenomenology (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1943), p. 29.

51. Ted Klein, "Husserl's Kantian Mediations," Southwestern Journal of Philosophy, 1974, 5, p. 72.

52. Ibid., p. 74.

53. Crisis, Appendix VI, pp. 374-375.

54. Ideas, p. 184.

55. Wilhelm Dilthey, "The Types of World-view and their Development in the Metaphysical Systems," in Wilhelm Dilthey: Selected Writings, p. 133.

Aristotle's De Anima and Marx's Theory of Man

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I

Some decades ago Ernst Bloch proposed that Marx's work could most profitably and naturally be viewed as the culmination of a "left-wing Aristotelian" tradition of thought. This tradition, said to have taken shape from the influence on the heterodox Latin disciples of Avicenna and Averroes, was to be characterized by its radical insistence on man's role in imposing form, through his transformative activity, on the dynamic and shapeable matter of the world. So conceived man took a role reserved, in the dominant tradition, for God. Coming into its own in the naturalistic pantheism of Bruno and in the work of Bacon, "left-wing Aristotelianism" thereupon flowed into the broad current of the Enlightenment and lost its own contours. It was Hegel's idealism, Bloch argues, which provided the occasion for Marx to reaffirm and advance the fundamentals of the

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